



DISCOVER THE HEART OF ENGLAND LEICESTERSHIRE

Uncover the story of a city and county with over 2,000 years of history where you are guaranteed a traditional 'taste' of England and a landscape of woodland and waterways perfect for gentle adventures.

WELCOME TO LEICESTERSHIRE

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Leicestershire has more than its fair share of water, with East and West Leicestershire being divided in almost two equal parts by the River Soar running through its heart. Eight rivers run along the boundary of this well-watered county, which, although of course entirely inland, is surrounded by 70 miles of water and 94 miles of land. You can boat canal staircases, scuba-dive in flooded quarries and fish in local reservoirs.

Whilst here visit the site of one of the bloodiest battles in English history and the gravesite where, over 500 years later, King Richard III's remains were discovered beneath a city car park. Alternatively follow in the footsteps of Thomas Cook on a steam railway excursion between Leicester and Loughborough. Leicestershire also offers an authentic taste of England with the ancient market town of Melton Mowbray claiming the title of Rural Capital of Food through its association with the pork pie and Stilton cheese.

Please see our day activity itineraries below for inspiration and ideas for visits to Leicestershire.



SAMPLE PROGRAMME FOR EXPLORING **LEICESTERSHIRE**

Day 1

‘Taste the heart of England’ in and around Melton Mowbray, the third oldest market town in England.

In the charming town centre, guests can visit the [Ye Olde Pork Pie Shoppe](#), the oldest pie shop in England. Groups can book a pie making demonstration or Pork Pie Experience workshop.

Your alternative would be a pie making workshop at [Brockleby's Pies](#), where individual visitors as well as groups are welcome. The pies can be baked and sent on to the hotel the following day. The [Grange Mountain restaurant](#) on site provides refreshments including afternoon teas and a fabulous range of homemade cakes.

Why not follow the pie experience by a cheese tasting experience at the [Melton Cheese Board](#), the area is famous for Stilton cheese.

Melton Mowbray is equally famous for its [wide range of markets](#) including livestock, farmers markets, antique & collectables and the Sunday Market. The market has a new micro-brewery which do [brewery tours](#) and have a tap room.

The Belvoir Brewery is also a popular site. Experienced guides will take guests through the history of brewing and the brewing process from raw materials to dispatch of the finest product. The [tour](#) will be followed by a tasting of three fine ales in the Alehouse. The tour can be extended for groups by adding a buffet of homemade local produce.

There might be time left to visit nearby [Belvoir Castle](#), home of the Duke of Rutland, with its formal gardens, woodland trails, country pursuits and Engine House rural retail village.



Accommodation options

There is a wide range of accommodation in Birmingham with options for all budgets. Melton Mowbray is a 90 minute drive from Birmingham.

Accommodation options in the more immediate area are:

- [Stapleford Park Country Hotel](#) - Luxury hotel with spa and golf breaks. Country pursuits including archery, falconry and clay pigeon shooting.
- [Best Western](#) Sysonby Knoll Hotel
- [Premier Inn](#) Hotel Melton Mowbray

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Day 2

'A journey through the heart of England and beyond' with King Richard III in Leicester, medieval history and travel through time on a steam train.

Start the day in Leicester, a city with 2000 years of history and the discovery story of [King Richard III](#). At the visitor centre guests will have an introduction to the **Wars of the Roses**, a series of bloody battles for the throne of England.

Fast forward 500 years from there and to a car park in Leicester city centre where the amazing discovery of the long-lost remains of King Richard were revealed. Close the circle by visiting nearby [Leicester Cathedral](#) which now contains the tomb of King Richard III.

Alternatively, you can hire a Blue Badge Guide for your group who will take you on a King Richard III [Walking Trail](#). While on the walk look out for the over 100 heritage panels around the city that tell the story of the city's historic buildings. The Old Town Area - The Lanes and St Martins – invite for a stroll or a refreshment break. Guests will find **boutique, vintage and independent shops** as well as cafes, bars and restaurants located in a former hosiery factory, an ancient schoolhouse, Edwardian Banking Hall, former suitcase factory and a Victorian businessmen's club.

In the afternoon travel on to Market Bosworth , a charming and ancient English market town, to discover medieval battlefields and a **steam train**.

To continue the historic theme of the day a visit to the [Bosworth Battlefield](#) Visitor Centre and Country Park can be included. This is the battlefield site where Richard III was defeated and killed in battle and the start of the King Richard III story.

Alternatively give the theme a twist and journey on the [heritage railway, the Battlefield Line](#) which runs from Shackerstone via Market Bosworth to Shenton in Leicestershire.



Accommodation options

Birmingham, with its wide choice of accommodation options is just 50 minutes from Market Bosworth.

To stay more locally, there are several accommodation providers in Leicester:

- [St Martins Lodge boutique hotel](#)
- [Belmont Hotel](#) on New Walk
- [Holiday Inn](#) Leicester City
- [Mercure The Grand Hotel](#)
- [Ramada Encore](#)

Or near Leicester city centre:

- [Hilton hotel](#)
- [Marriott hotel](#)
- [College Court hotel](#)
- [Winstanley House](#)

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Day 3

'The National Forest and the Forest Town' . Enjoy gentle adventures and an 'English cottages to castles' heritage experience.

The National Forest is right in heart of the country, embracing 200 square miles of the Midlands. It spans across parts of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire and aims to link the two ancient Forests of Charnwood and Needwood. With a history of coalmining and heavy industry, the landscape is now that of rolling farmland, ancient forests and new planted woodlands. Its main towns and villages include Burton upon Trent (famous for its brewing), Coalville and Swadlincote and the historic and quintessential English market town of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, with a range of boutiques and eateries.



Nearby you find [Ashby Castle](#), an English Heritage site. The property began as a manor house in the 12th Century and reached castle status in the 15th Century. Ashby Castle formed the backdrop to the famous jousting scenes in Sir Walter Scott's classic novel, Ivanhoe.

[Stoneywell Arts & Crafts Cottage and gardens](#) make a wonderful visit, it is a real National Trust gem. It is the largest of a small group of cottages designed in the Arts & Crafts style and was built in 1899 as a summer residence. It still contains much of its original furniture and has a wonderful garden and woodland to explore.

If you are looking for something a little grander, [Staunton Harold Hall](#) and Church with landscaped country park can be found nearby - a traditional country estate of some 2000 acres, centred on the great Georgian mansion. You can stroll around the estate and visit the church but the Hall is not accessible. In the stables complex is the [Ferrers Arts Centre](#) which is a craft / retail village where visitors can **see craftsmen at work** in their studios, including leather making, silver-smithing, ceramic, jewellery and textile artists and a Victorian model artist . There are also cafes and a deli with homemade bread. It is the perfect place to find a special gift or souvenir.



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Day 3

‘The National Forest and the Forest Town’ . Enjoy gentle adventures and an ‘English cottages to castles’ heritage experience.

In fact, the choice does not end here. [Calke Abbey](#) is described by the National Trust as an unstately, Grade I listed country house estate near Ticknall, Derbyshire, England. The site was an Augustinian priory from the 12th Century until its dissolution by Henry VIII. The present building, named Calke Abbey in 1808, was never actually an abbey, but is a Baroque mansion built between 1701 and 1704. Owned by the Harpur family for nearly 300 years it was passed to the Trust in 1985 in lieu of death duties. Open to the public today, many of its rooms are deliberately displayed in the state of decline in which the house was handed to the Trust. There are a number of walking trails that can be built into a programme as soft activity.

Another gem in the area is [Mount St Bernard Abbey](#). Enjoy the tranquillity of the monastery grounds and visit the Abbey shop where you can buy Tynt Meadow, the Trappist ale brewed by the monks on site. It is one of only 12 Trappist breweries in the world.

For more active experiences, why not try:

- [Hicks Lodge cycle hire](#) to cycle around the National Forest
- [Forest trails for walking](#)
- Charnwood Forest [Alpaca Experience](#)

Accommodation options

Birmingham and Leicester are within easy reach of the National Forest.

Local accommodation is also available:

- [Priest House](#) on the River
- [Abbots Oak Manor](#)
- [Champneys](#) Springs Health Resort
- [Best Western](#) Premier Yew Lodge Hotel

Or:

- [Hilton East Midlands Airport](#)
- [Radisson Blu East Midlands Airport](#)



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Day 4

'**The Great Age of Steam and the Great Outdoors**' for a relaxing day in the heart of England.

Loughborough, a short drive from Leicester, is the home to the [Great Central Railway](#) – the UK's only **main line heritage railway** and the only place in the world where full sized steam engines can be seen passing each other.

A series of stations along the line have been beautifully restored to reflect different periods in the railway's history and have charming cafes. The railway has a range of Pullman carriages for **first class dining experiences** – carriages are available for private group bookings or public dining. Enjoy spectacular views of the Leicestershire countryside as you dine.

In the afternoon, continue to [Bradgate County Park](#) and Newtown Linford. Explore Leicestershire's most popular country park and re-fuel with delicious cakes in one of the many Newtown Linford tea rooms.



Accommodation options

Leicester is the most convenient accommodation centre for this day, other local hotels include:

- [Burleigh Court](#)
- [Quorn Grange Hotel](#)
- [Rothley Court Hotel](#)

For more information about days out in Leicestershire, please contact:

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Or visit www.visitleicester.info or www.goleicestershire.com